

SC-02232-67

Copy No. 5

23 May 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT: Briefing by the Director of CIA Subcommittees of
Senate Armed Services and Appropriations -
23 May 1967**

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1. The Director, accompanied by [REDACTED] met with the CIA Subcommittees of Senate Armed Services and Appropriations. The meeting commenced at 10:30 a.m. and ran until noon. Present from the Subcommittees were:

Richard B. Russell
Margaret Chase Smith
John Stennis
Carl Hayden
Strom Thurmond
Milton R. Young

Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper also attended. William Darden and William Woodruff, from the staff, also attended. Prior to the hearing there was a sweep of the room and there was monitoring during the hearing. No transcript was taken.

2. The Director briefed on the Middle East situation reading from the prepared briefing. In connection with the Israeli shoot down of six Syrian MIGs, the Director pointed out that the earlier Iranian defector to Israel who had flown in a MIG-21 had permitted Israeli pilots to learn the handling characteristics of MIGs. The Director also pointed out that in the last ten days [REDACTED]

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Mr. Helms also reported that just last week an intelligence report was distributed concerning the use by Egyptians of a nerve gas in the Yemen conflict. He indicated that the shell casings and Cyrillic writings would indicate that in all likelihood the Soviets have supplied support to the Egyptians in this field.

3. In response to a question as to the quality of the Egyptian army, the Director pointed out there are still some 30,000 to 40,000 troops tied down in Yemen and the general standard in the Egyptian army is not high. The Director further concluded that it was our estimate that the Israeli army is entirely competent to take on the combined forces of Syria and Egypt.

4. A question was asked about the Tripartite Agreement and the positions of the U. S., France and England. The Director stated he was not aware of what responses, if any, France and England had given to any Israeli requests.

5. Senator Russell asked some questions about the Garrison matter. The Director pointed out that none of the allegations concerning the Agency made by Garrison are true in any respect. He pointed out how the photograph of an unidentified person had been taken in Mexico and now reposes in the Warren files. Mr. Helms also mentioned the letter sent by the Agency General Counsel to the Judge explaining that we had no such photograph as Garrison was attempting to subpoena. The Director stated that he saw no reason why he should comment publicly at this time. Senator Thurmond stated that he thought the American people had a right to hear Mr. Helms on this. Senators Russell, Hickenlooper and Stennis were most emphatic that Mr. Helms should make no comment.

6. Senator Russell inquired about the ability to keep former employees quiet. The Director pointed out that he had discussed this matter just yesterday with the Attorney General and got no solace. He added that the Attorney General said he knew of no practical recourse under the law. Senator Russell stated that even if the prosecutions were technically feasible, he thought it might be unwise to do so at this time.

7. Questions were then raised about continued funding of organizations. Mr. Helms pointed out that, by Presidential directive, aid to private organizations had to be cut off by at least 31 December 1967. Senator Russell volunteered that these programs, in his view, were the most effective programs run by the Agency and he doubted that any other organization could accomplish the results. Senator Hickenlooper also stated he thought it was too bad the support had to end but agreed with Senator Russell that with the disclosures this was the only appropriate thing.

8. Senator Smith inquired about morale in the Agency and effectiveness. The Director stated that he, of course, had been concerned about this but he did not believe morale had been affected at all. As to operations, he pointed out that the activities involved in recent disclosures are compartmentalized and isolated and have no affect on other activities and they are in no better or worse shape than before.

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10. The Director then briefed on subversion in Latin America, reading from the prepared briefing for the Rivers group. He read through page 13 and summarized the rest. Senator Russell asked about Che Guevara. Mr. Helms gave his own personal view that Che was dead since there had been no valid evidence of his being alive.

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11. Senator Russell then asked some questions on Vietnam. [REDACTED] furnished figures on North Vietnamese strength in South Vietnam. It was pointed out that the standing army of North Vietnam is 250,000 and is rated as one of the best Asiatic armies. Senator Russell asked was Giap in South Vietnam. [REDACTED] pointed out that while he was not, in effect the overall commander of the North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam was Nguyen Chi Thanh, a four-star general and is as senior an officer as Giap and is also a member of the North Vietnam Politburo. In response to a question, [REDACTED] stated that most military supplies come in overland by rail and road unless one counted POL which does come in by ship. Senator Russell inquired about the recent report he had received from the military that the North Vietnamese had captured the HAWK missile. The Director stated he had not heard of this but we would check into this and advise.

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12. Senator Young inquired of the value of Svetlana. The Director stated it is doubted she would give any significant current information although the background would be useful and certainly this was a psychological defeat for the Soviets.

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Legislative Counsel

Att. (With Memo for Record
of Briefing of Rivers Group,
Same Date)

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Copy 2 - DCI thru Ex Dir

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Copy 3 - DDCI

Copy 4 - ADDP

Copy 5 - [REDACTED]

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MFR/Russell 5/23

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